[102 cont.]

623 All dèsa business is discussed in these village meetings, including financial matters, and thus the amount of the taxes to be levied is discussed and fixed.

634 Districts. A collection of villages forms a district, at the head of which stands a pambekelgedé or poenggawa. They are [625 702] involved in the management of the dèsa only insofar as matters of policing and army service (service outside the dèsa) are concerned. The grouping into districts, therefore, has no great significance for the ordinary Balinese. This cannot be said of the principalities, the larger political units that developed on Bali and now belong completely to the past.

● 64 174 Princes. According to Liefrinck (1), the Balinese principali-

1. F.A. Liefrinck, "Bijdrage tot de kennis van het eiland Bali (Contributions to Knowledge of the Island of Bali)" Tijdschrift voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlands Indië, Vol. 33, p. 347 f.

ties probably came into being in the following manner. In former times the various dèsa often had questions to discuss [312 721] among themselves, especially concerning water for irrigation purposes. Originally, this perhaps led to armed combat, but gradually the parties came to appeal to arbitration by persons in whose judgment they had faith. These persons exercised a growing influence in the course of time. Their descendants knew how to strengthen this and to draw the whole of the administration of justice into their hands. As soon as they succeeded in making themselves masters of the rights to irrigation water and were able to claim payment for the use of it, [103] they [643] became full-fledged Eastern despots. During the period when the Balinese princes had unlimited power, it was in very small measure a blessing for the ordinary people; on the contrary, [641] in most cases it was a heavy burden. The inhabitants had to [651] guard the poeri, the royal residence; the prince placed a tariff

64 [103 cont.]
174 on agricultural products, especially rice and coconuts, and the
651 best of these products had to be presented to him.

Soebak. Bali, a land where sawah cultivation is of the
634 greatest importance and where the inhabitants are therefore
312 greatly concerned about having a regular supply of irrigation
476 water, is also a land where a peculiar native jurisdictional community has developed, the Balinese polder, soebak. It is true that this is very closely connected with agriculture and thus could be dealt with in the chapter on "Means of Subsistence," but because of its special importance for Balinese society and because it is a special form of jurisdictional community, we will discuss it in this chapter as a more suitable place.

The soebak is formed when new land is opened up, with the aim of procuring for the owners of small holdings the advantages that large sawah holdings have (with regard to irrigation water). This form of co-operation in no way diminishes the rights of ownership of the small holders. The soebak, then, is an association of all the cultivators whose sawahs can be irrigated from one aqueduct, with the aim of building and caring for the upkeep of the aqueduct and also of regulating, through mutual consultations, the other agricultural operations. One soebak may embrace several dèsa, and in large dèsa there may be more than one soebak.

At the head of a soebak is the klian soebak, chosen by all the members who make up the sekaha soebak. He keeps a list of the members and is charged with governing sawah operations in consultation with the members. Once it has been decided
[685 when the rice is to be planted, he must see to it that this actu-
627] ally is done. He must also be on guard against water thieves. He tries to settle amicably the questions that arise among the members of the soebak.

[623] When matters warrant it, the klian calls a meeting. Usually the meetings take place on a definite day of the month (35 days), sometimes at each [104] full moon. At first these meetings are held in the open, later in the newly built soebak temple.